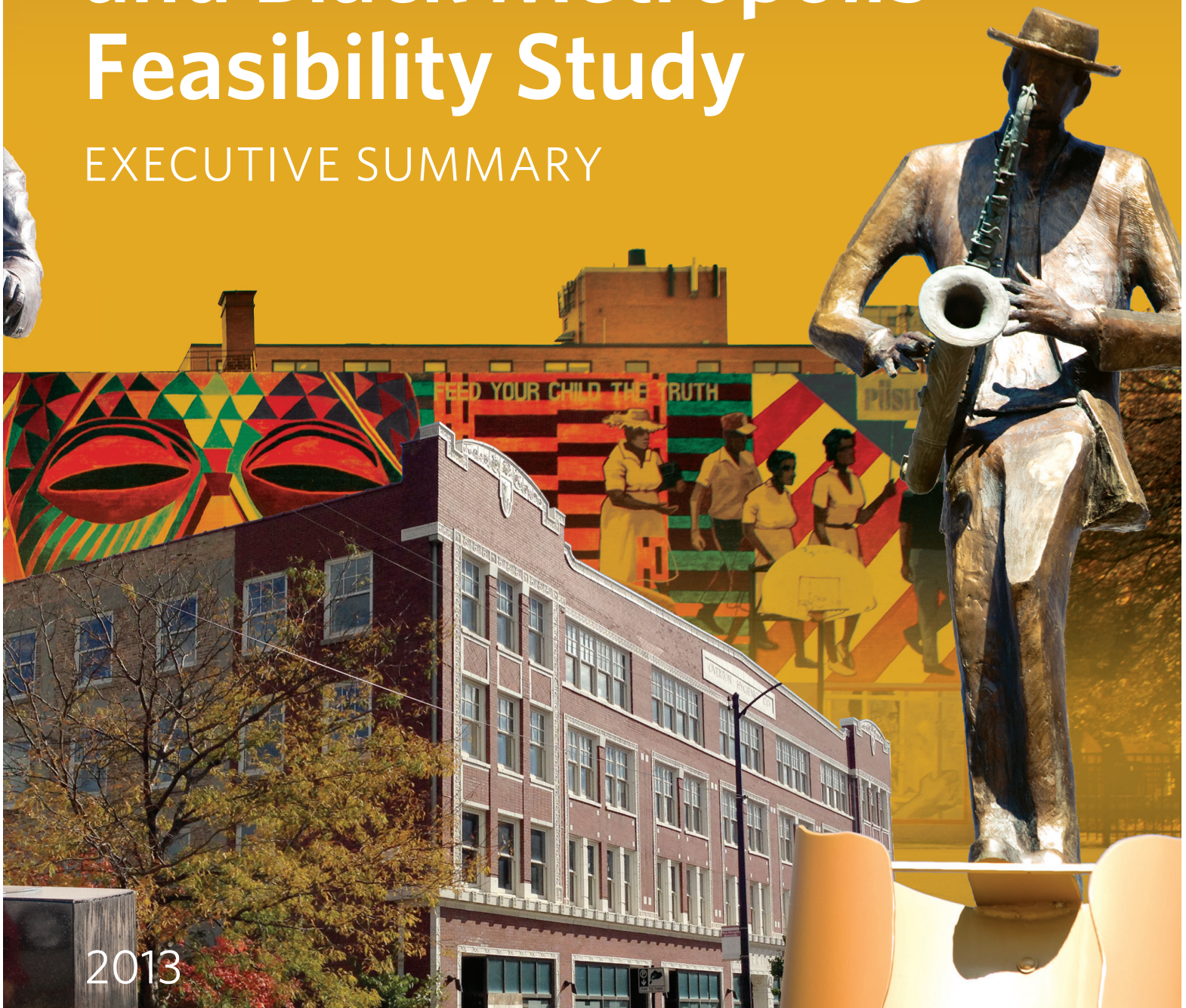


CMAP



Great Migration and Black Metropolis Feasibility Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2013

Executive Summary

This Black Metropolis-Bronzeville National Heritage Area (NHA) Feasibility Study supports the designation of Chicago's mid-South Side, a heritage area that tells the story of African-Americans' struggle and perseverance during the Great Migration and beyond, as an NHA. The African-Americans who moved to the South Side of Chicago in the early 1900s left a lasting legacy in the community and is an important chapter in our nation's history. The impact the Great Migration had on Chicago has been well documented by scholars, historians, and local residents who, in some cases, remember what it was like to walk the Stroll, the center of the Black community, enveloped by music, nightlife, and a bustling business community.

During the Great Migration, thousands of African-American migrants moved to the North, coming by train, foot, and car to escape the intense oppression of the South. Northern cities, like Chicago, were touted as places of great opportunity. While the North was far from paradise, there was room for African-Americans to obtain an education and create a cultural and economic mecca for themselves. This mecca is what this study refers to as the Black Metropolis; it was a place to see and be seen, a community that was home to a who's who of Black America. It was a place that cultivated a number of African-American firsts, which included such names as Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Jesse Binga, Ida B. Wells, Jack Johnson, Nat King Cole, Mahalia Jackson, John Johnson, and Muddy Waters – professionals, entrepreneurs and artists who have made important contributions to our nation.

NHAs are important not only because they highlight the history of the founding of America and invaluable natural resources; heritage areas also recognize the people and cultural resources that have helped make America what it is today. The story of African-American migration to the North, and to Chicago's South Side, is a part of many individuals' and families' histories. African-American pioneers during the Great Migration fought for much of what many take for granted today. They influenced not only music, arts and culture, politics and civil rights, and social activism, but they paved the way for African-American business and entrepreneurial pursuits and successes.

The criteria for national heritage area designation are not insignificant, and neither are the results of this study. While the writing of this feasibility study has taken a year, the community has put forth decades of their time and energy to garner support for an NHA designation. The study area is eight-and-a-half square miles and located completely within the City of Chicago. Within these boundaries there are over 200 assets – buildings, collections, people, environmental resources, and more – that, when considered collectively, exhibit a compelling story of what it was like to be an African-American during the Great Migration. From the roots of gospel music to the 2008 election of Barack Obama, the Black Metropolis-Bronzeville community has played a significant role in the nation's history. Local residents, businesses, community-based organizations, institutions, government entities, and others have come together to support this feasibility study, and ultimately the area's designation as an NHA.

The interpretation of the story of African-American history during the Great Migration is a critical component to the education of Americans no matter what their race. The Black Metropolis-Bronzeville area possesses much more than is learned in school about the history of African-Americans after slavery. By fostering understanding and learning across racial and cultural lines, we as Americans become better equipped to work with one another. The strength and commitment of the Black Metropolis-Bronzeville community, its physical assets, and the opportunity to share them is the reason why the Black Metropolis-Bronzeville area is worthy of NHA designation.

Upon completion, this Feasibility Study will be shared with partners to confirm their support, so that they can continue to work together to develop a conceptual financial plan outlining the roles for all participants and the federal government.

Purpose of the feasibility study

This Feasibility Study has been undertaken by the [Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Commission](#) (Commission) and the Bronzeville Community Development Partnership (the Partnership), along with numerous community partners. Technical assistance was provided by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) [Local Technical Assistance \(LTA\) program](#), the [City of Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development](#) (DHED), and its [Historic Preservation Division](#) (HPres). This Feasibility Study seeks to explore a number of important factors that will inform the National Park Service (NPS) as it considers designation of the study area as an NHA. Moreover, this study seeks to determine whether NHA designation is the best way to achieve coordinated conservation, preservation, education, and economic goals of the community, with the hope that these efforts will prove that the Black Metropolis is qualified for designation as a NHA by the United States Congress.

The Feasibility Study is organized into eight chapters. The following describes what can be found in each chapter. The full Feasibility Study can be found online at www.blackmetropolisnha.com/ and www.cmap.illinois.gov/bmnha.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the Feasibility Study and the process by which this study has been developed.

Chapter 2: Study Area History and Contributions

This chapter describes the history of the people and landscape of the Black Metropolis from the 1800s to present day. It discusses the people, places, and ideas that have influenced Chicago and America's history.

Chapter 3: Themes

Building off the study area history and contributions, Chapter 3 lays out the interpretive themes that this heritage area should focus on in its first few years of development.

Chapter 4: Affected Environment

This chapter describes resources in the study area and the potential impacts of the proposed interpretive themes. Future projects undertaken within the heritage area will require further evaluation when the design and project implementation details are more fully defined.

Chapter 5: Management Alternatives

This chapter describes three alternative management approaches for the implementation of the heritage area goals. It covers the proposed organizational structure of the coordinating entity, implementation strategies and actions, potential partners, possible funding opportunities, and early implementation activities.

Chapter 6: Application of Interim NHA Criteria

This chapter discusses each criterion and evaluates the potential for NHA designation.

Chapter 7: Vision Statement

Based on public input and engagement, the vision statement of the proposed heritage area is described in detail in this chapter.

Chapter 8: Impact Assessment

This chapter describes the anticipated impacts related to the various management alternatives. It also addresses the potential impacts of identified management alternatives described in Chapter 4.

What are National Heritage Areas?

NHAs are designated by the U.S. Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. Heritage areas tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation's diverse heritage. NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Consequently, NHA entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

NHAs are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. Through public-private partnerships, NHA entities support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects. Leveraging funds and long-term support for projects, NHA partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic.

NHAs are not national park units. Rather, NPS partners with, provides technical assistance, and distributes matching federal funds from Congress to NHA entities. NPS does not assume ownership of land inside heritage areas or impose land use controls.¹

¹ From <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/FAQ/>.

For more information on national heritage areas, visit:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/>.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to provide the NPS with information regarding the appropriateness of designating Chicago's Black Metropolis area as a NHA. Located within the greater Bronzeville community, the Black Metropolis NHA would establish a framework within which residents, community organizations, local institutions, businesses, and elected officials will work together to interpret the area's distinctive landscape, history, and culture of the Black Metropolis, and the story of the Great Migration. The ultimate goal of the NHA will be to focus on tourism and economic development, building upon the community's existing education and cultural tourism resources.

After designation, the first step in the process will be to establish a coordinating entity, which will connect various organizations seeking to share, educate, and interpret the history of Bronzeville; organizations that seek to improve quality of life in the community; and organizations looking to promote the area to visitors and prospective investors to ensure that future development in Bronzeville is informed by its rich history and cultural legacy. The coordinating entity will assist in preserving and protecting the historic sites, neighborhoods, and cultural artifacts of Chicago's Black Metropolis and Great Migration period. It will also promote the area's history and reinforce the accomplishments of Chicago's African-Americans to current and future generations.

Study process

The process to develop this study was informed by nearly two decades of coalition-building led by community-based organizations, specifically the Bronzeville Community Development Partnership (the Partnership) and the Bronzeville Visitor Information Center (BVIC). These two organizations are not-for-profit organizations located in the heart of the present-day Black Metropolis. They have collaborated for many years to pursue a number of goals, one of which is authenticating the importance of the Black Metropolis to our nation's history by seeking NHA designation.

The Partnership is a collaboration of nine community-based organizations, local institutions, and neighborhood businesses that serve as partners and advisors who represent a broad spectrum of social, cultural, and tourism interests throughout the community. The Partnership's purpose is to advance Bronzeville's profile as a destination for cultural and heritage tourism, and to ensure that tourism and any associated development contributes to local sustainability.

Study area

The Black Metropolis study area is located in the greater Bronzeville community of the City of Chicago, approximately five miles south of downtown. The general boundaries are; 18th Street to the North, 71st Street to the South, Lake Michigan to the East, and Canal Street to the West

(see Figure 1. Black Metropolis Study Area). This area represents an assemblage of natural, historic, educational, and recreational resources. It is a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape that is worthy of preservation through the heritage area designation. The area includes a number of Chicago community areas, including the following: Armour Square, Douglas, Fuller Park, Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, Kenwood, Near South Side, Oakland, Washington Park, and Woodlawn (see Figure 2. Existing Black Metropolis Heritage Assets by Theme).

Figure 1. Black Metropolis Study Area

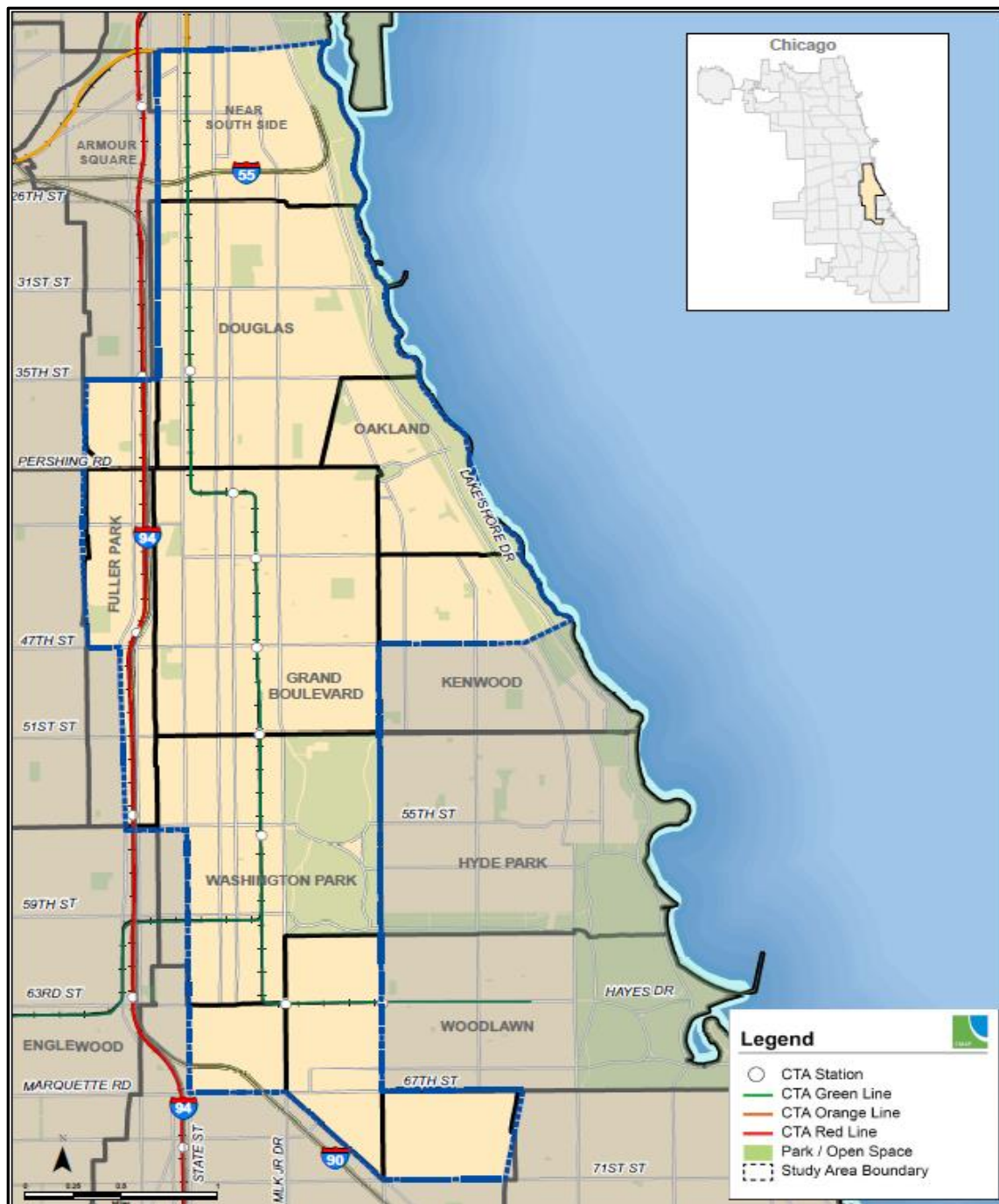
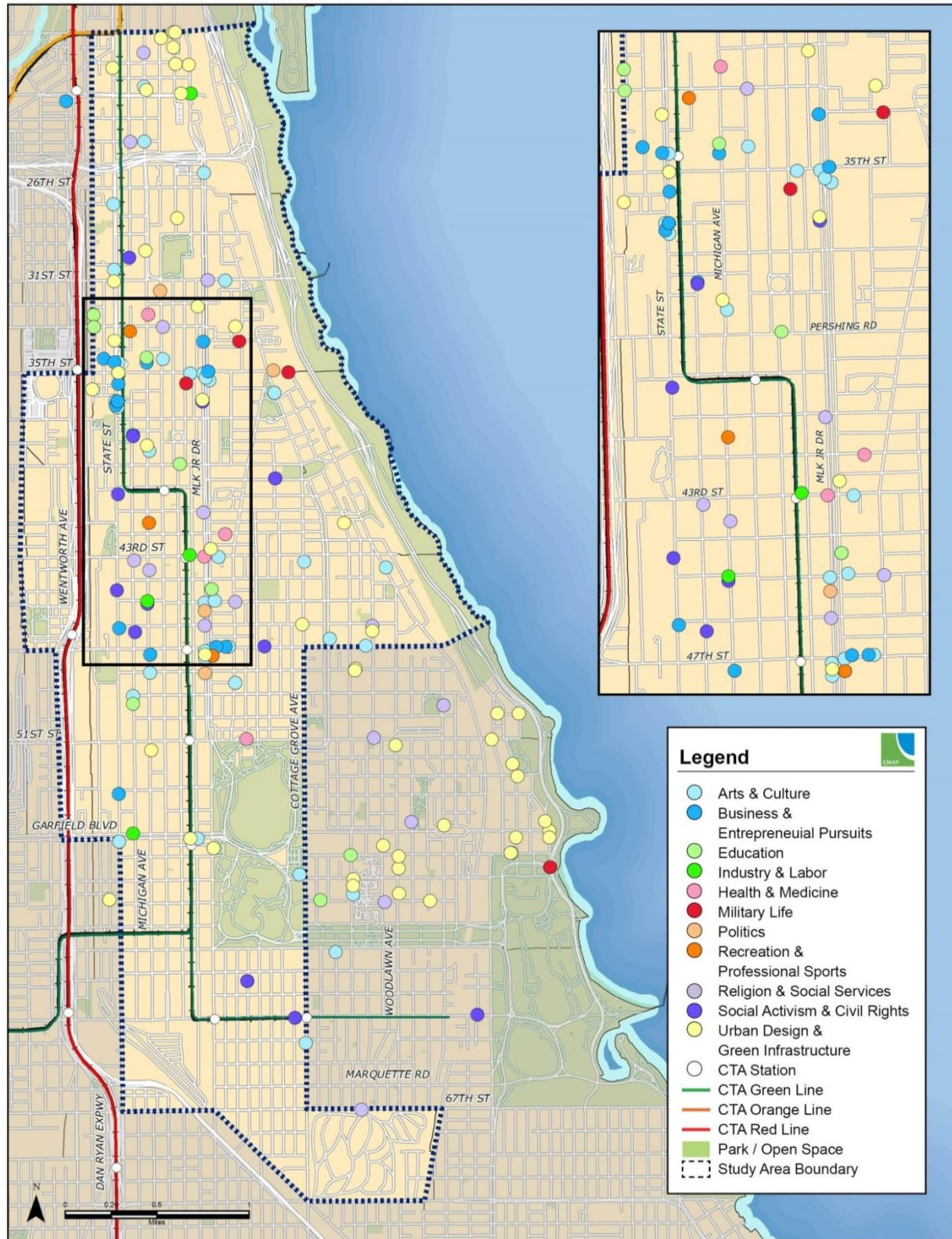


Figure 2. Existing Black Metropolis Heritage Assets by Theme





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